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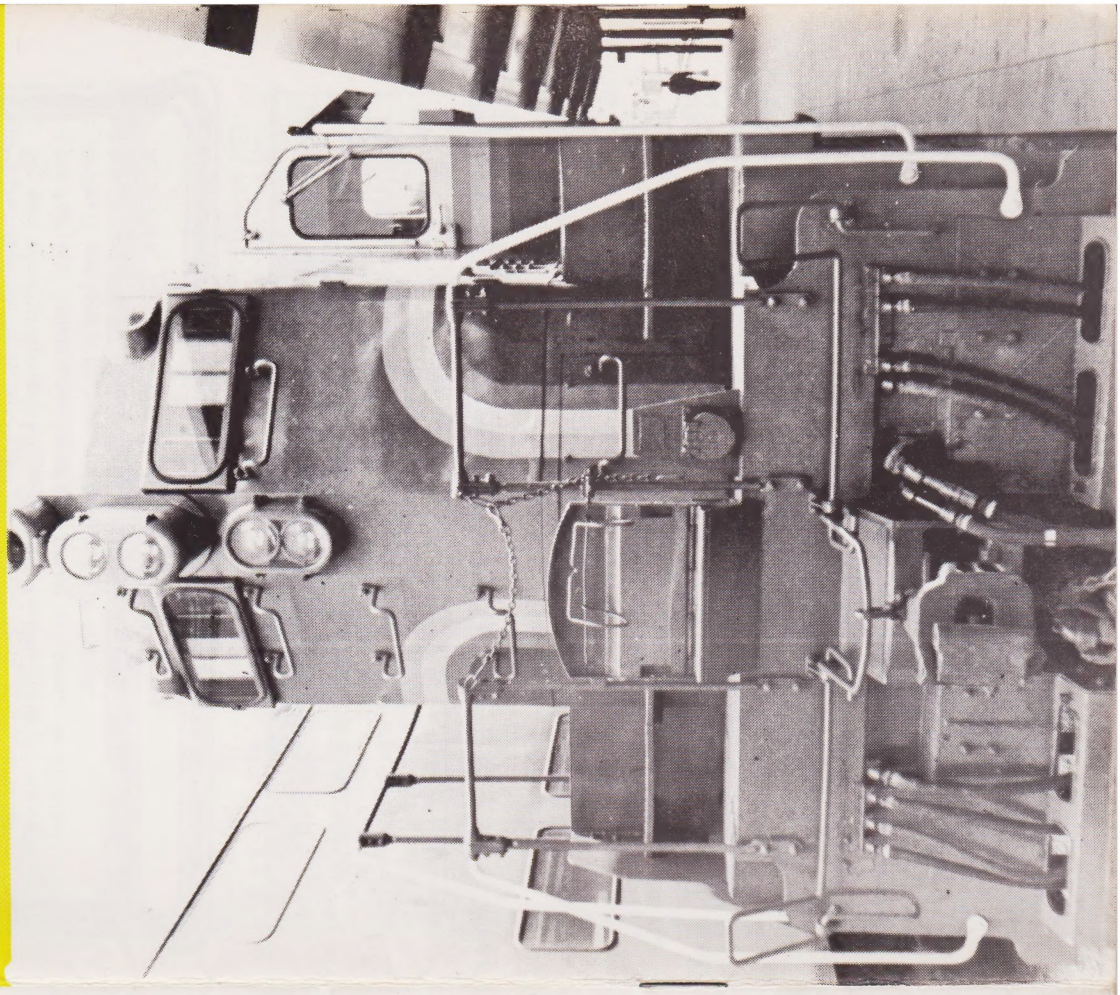

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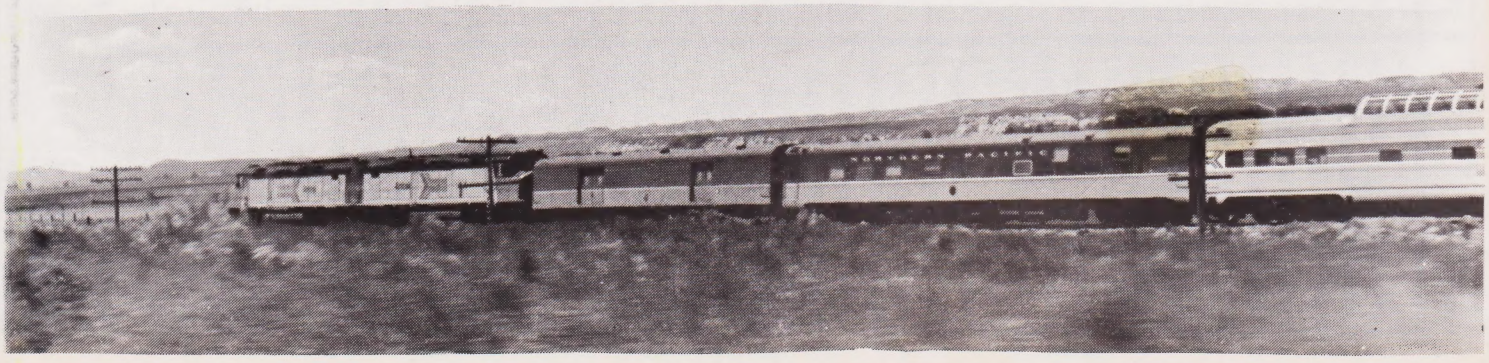

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LETTERS

Upon returning from Lake Tahoe and the Truckee area by train, we were very surprised to read a correction in RTN 247 (page 16) pertaining to Amcafe car 20222 in the article by Jim Russell, "San Diego Rail Adventures" in issue 245.

It is not an Amdinette as in the correction. Mr. Russell's article is correct.

On July 19 we took the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA from Los Angeles to Oakland with Amcafe car 20222, which was also the same train that was six hours late (but made up one hour) getting into Oakland due to a beet car which derailed a freight train just north of Pt. Concepcion. (We were sweating out missing the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR to Truckee.)

The reason for my remembering the Amcafe car number was from what my husband said "Boy, would I like to have a poker hand with that number. Four deuces with a ten high."

Velva W. May
Ramona, California

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The reverse side of this letter is a standard train order issued as necessary every year on the Western Division of SP. Perhaps BN's management needs a refresher course on the effect of Murphy's Law on railroad operations. (Ed. note: The order, dated Apr 10, reads "Heavy rains reported over entire district. Look out for washouts and slides where likely to occur. Lose time if necessary to insure safety".)

Your Editor recently reported (RTN 245) on a roundtrip via sleeper on the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA--aka "Nightcrawler"--and STARLIGHT Superliner. Mr. Russell commented unfavorably on the sleeper's rough ride due to not-so-good track on SP's Coast Line. Two points need to be made. One is that part of the reason for SP's first-quarter railroad operating loss and the second quarter's dismal performance was the Company's insistence on continuing the Coast Line's expensive track renewal program despite the lack of traffic and revenue. The other is that the "Nightcrawler's" sleepers' trucks need overhaul. You can run tired trucks over superior track or good trucks over tired track and everything will seem fine. Tired trucks over tired track don't make it, and SP has been doing its part to correct the problem despite its economic plight.

Reginald Stocking II
San Francisco, California

ON THE COVER

Caltrain #53 rests at the end of its commute line in San Francisco on Memorial Day, 1982. Newly-repainted engine 3187 has lead also-repainted cars 3700 and 3701 from San Jose, leaving the latter city at 2pm and reaching San Francisco at 3:25pm. Alongside it, another Peninsula commute train faces San Jose and waits for its departure hour. In this issue, Editor Jim Russell talks about this commute line and what riding it is like these days. RTN photo.

(Rear cover:) As reported in recent RTNs, a move is on to restore the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA route across Southern Montana, etc. In this photo, the former Amtrak NORTH COAST HIAWATHA runs eastbound about 30 miles northeast of Billings MT in the early summer of 1975. Photo by Paul Rayton.

Regarding the letter by Rocky Shay (RTN 247), when this letter came to me I was rather appalled. If he would make sure his brain was engaged when he wrote the letter, he would have seen the reasons Amtrak did what they did regarding the Oct 25, 1981 rerouting of the EMPIRE BUILDER over the Stevens Pass line (via Wenatchee).

First, if ANYONE who has been aboard the BUILDER in recent years east of Spokane says that the train is weak between St. Paul and Spokane, they slept all the way thru. The strongest segment of the run is, in fact, that section between St. Paul and Whitefish MT...

Besides that, if you will remember, the St. Paul-Chicago segment of the BUILDER DID run daily during the period Oct 25-Dec 15, 1981. Apparently, Mr. Shay has forgotten.

As for the switching of diner and lounge cars' destination goes, it's a dead issue anyway; fully one-half of the BUILDER's dining car crews are based at Seattle, while the lounge car attendants are split between Chicago and St. Paul bases.

It is my wish that those who are still crying over the milk spilled last October would stop bawling and start thinking. The Wenatchee line serves more of Washington State (with the Portland section) on a route which is at least three hours faster, than his beloved Yakima routing, on a better-maintained line, in an area which has less subsidized competitors than the ex-NP routing. If these major improvements really ARE the first major manifestation of a "Public-be-Damned" attitude at Amtrak, will the next one be a revival of a South Line train across North Dakota and Montana?

If Mr. Shay would stop his railfanning long enough to look at this from a commonsense point of view, even HE would see that the travel patterns which have been built along the route of the BUILDER for the last 90 years dictate operating the train via the Stevens Pass route.

As for the equipment sitting at Seattle, he also has a curious lapse of memory when he forgets that there are TWO major long-haul trains operating from Seattle (the other being the COAST STARLIGHT, which, by the way, has not really been a stellar performer this year, either, thanks to the "friendly" Southern Pacific. At least the Burlington Northern will show some sort of concern for the BUILDER).

Not that I am entirely in disagreement with what Mr. Shay says, however. We in Minnesota lost part of the route of the same train (the ex-GN routing via Willmar, Morris and Breckenridge) in favor of the ex-NP routing via St. Cloud, Staples and Detroit Lakes--three stations that, in the second quarter of FY '82 together handled 2436 passengers--less than Grand Forks did ALL BY ITSELF! And to further state, Grand Forks had to do it with a bus connection to the train at the site of the new West Grand Forks station (now under construction).

So to Mr. Shay and all those who want to run at the mouth about their favorite railfanning spot not being served by Amtrak, I ask that they remember to look at the decisions made before crying wolf.

We on the "east end" are going to work for a South Line train. It needs a route to Seattle. How about it, Rocky--here's your chance!

Brian Cutter, NARP Region VII Director
Richfield, Minnesota

In his letter in RTN 247, Mr. Shay has twisted the facts to the point of bordering on the ridiculous. Mr. Shay says that the Seattle section of the EMPIRE BUILDER carries only 20 to 40 people. The only time this may have been true was in Jan 1982 after the train became daily. Not only did Amtrak not advertise the train's daily operation, but the Amtrak computer didn't even show it as running daily! Nowadays the train between Spokane and Seattle carries well over 100 passengers according to the Arrow computer. What really makes Mr. Shay's stattment ridiculous is that anyone knows that each westbound EMPIRE BUILDER carries well over 40 passengers from points east of Spokane destined for Seattle, which has nothing to do with how the train gets FROM Spokane to Seattle.

But the thing that gripes me most is when Mr. Shay says, "Texans, you have every right to scream about the BUILDER being daily year round west of the Twin Cities when your potential-laden trains are still stuck on tri-weekly service." Well, I have serious doubts about anyone who thinks the EAGLE's route thru Texas has a lot of potential in the first place, and in the second place, how does he get off thinking the current EMPIRE BUILDER only deserves tri-weekly status just because it doesn't go thru his beloved Yakima? Why is the state of Washington so damned important? Ridership across Montana and North Dakota is very strong, as the Arrow computer will show. And, in contrast to cities formerly and presently served by the EMPIRE BUILDER in Washington, our bus and air service in Montana and North Dakota ranges from poor to nil. Yes, in spite of the fact that it goes thru Montana's least populous area, misses Yakima completely, and is forced to take a route at least 1½ hours shorter across Washington state, the EMPIRE BUILDER is second in the West only to the COAST STARLIGHT in ridership. (And the STARLIGHT misses Yakima too!) If the Wenatchee rerouting was as big of a disaster as Mr. Shay leads us to believe (and hopes for), even the addition of a Portland section wouldn't be able to save the EMPIRE BUILDER from losing all its riders, especially in these recessionary times. How DOES it survive?

Mr. Shay also doesn't think Amtrak should have the authority to change routes on its own, just because his pet route lost its train! Having Amtrak call the shots is infinitely better than having politicians butt in. After

all, wasn't the Houston leg of the INTER-AMERICAN wonderful? Yes, almost as worthwhile as the INTER-AMERICAN itself--especially after discontinuing the LONE STAR. And Amtrak's not free yet--the BROADWAY LIMITED will continue to run on the ex-Pennsy main across Indiana and Ohio, in spite of the fact that Conrail will only provide local service west of Bucyrus OH, but Amtrak will be stuck with the cost of maintaining the line to passenger train speed. Are Lima and Fort Wayne worth it? I think not, especially compared to the advantages of a route thru Toledo and Cleveland. Amtrak just can't afford it!

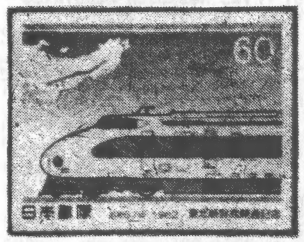
Getting back to the main point, I would welcome an article in RTN by Mr. Shay on some other subject, but we all know very well his opinion on the EMPIRE BUILDER's rerouting thru Washington, and you also know mine. Isn't that enough from both of us?

Mark W. Meyer
Havre, Montana

STUDY SAYS BULLET TRAIN LINE IS FEASIBLE

American High Speed Rail Corporation's feasibility and engineering studies for the proposed Los Angeles-San Diego Bullet Train line have been completed, reported the L.A. Times on July 27. American High Speed Rail is not publicly releasing the marketing study done by the Arthur D. Little consulting group because it considers it its own property, but the rail corporation told the L.A. Times that the consultants concluded that the line would attract at least 20% of all trips made between the two cities, making the venture feasible.

The plan is to operate 50 trains daily in each direction on a 59-minute schedule. The Japanese engineers who studied the route recommended not following Interstate 5 so closely as the original plan proposed, but instead using elevated trackage near the Santa Fe rail line for much of the route. Some tunnels would be built thru the hills immediately north of San Diego. The original price tag of $1.9 billion was adhered to by the engineers. The major portions of the route where the freeway would be followed rather than the rail line are south of Anaheim about 2/3 of the distance to San Juan Capistrano, and from Oceanside to Del Mar.



Japan, proud of its passenger trains, unlike the U.S. government, issued the postage stamp pictured here for the June 23 opening of the new Tohoku Bullet Train (Shinkansen) line. When 7200 tickets were put on sale for the opening run, they sold out within a matter of minutes.

The marketing consultants made conservative estimates, the rail corporation said, and concluded that present ridership figures for the SAN DIEGAN line would more than triple when Bullet Trains are introduced (which would be 1988, according to current estimates). A population growth of only 2.5% a year was assumed, and a 1% increase per year in the number of people who do not travel between the two cities but who would if high-speed train travel was available. A spur line from downtown L.A. to the L.A. International Airport was recommended. Some modification of the express schedule L.A.-San Diego was discussed, with some trains stopping in Santa Ana or Anaheim or elsewhere in order to tap population potential in Orange County. The consultants made the assumption that only people living within a 5-mile radius of points along the line would use it, and within a 10-mile radius of end points.

American High Speed Rail told the L.A. Times that within the next two months it will hire a prominent American civil engineering firm to review the consultants' reports and then begin design and environmental work on the project.

RAIL CANADA

TORONTO-PETERBOROUGH TRAIN will be discontinued in September, but a group of 15 businessmen, heading the Toronto-Peterborough-Havelock Passenger Association, want to take over the train, and are negotiating with CP Rail to run it under contract to them.

VIA'S NEW PRESIDENT, Pierre Franche, told the press upon his appointment that he will give priority to two objectives in the coming months: (1) to see that VIA has a clear legal arrangement with the railways for establishing costs, and (2) to continue to increase the load factors of VIA trains, which have increased from 44% to 52% over the past two years.

IN SHAKEDOWN RUNS, VIA has been gaining experience with the LRC trains, and reports the following changes and improvements will be made: applying seat numbers to the seats; improving toilets by better signs and stronger latches and by designating the larger (handicapped) toilet a unisex toilet and the smaller one for women. An order for an additional 10 locomotives and 50 coaches has been placed, and these will come with more darkly-tinted windows and larger galleys in the club cars. VIA said these cars will be operated in the West and the Maritimes as well as on the Quebec-Windsor route.

JASPER WILL BE connected directly with Vancouver again starting Oct 31, according to an announcement in early August. The British Columbia Railway will run a tri-weekly North Vancouver to Prince George train to connect with the VIA Prince George-Jasper-Edmonton service. Thru ticketing will be available. There will be a bus connection between the two Prince George stations, eight kilometers apart.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT CANADA by Thomas Higgins

Nearly all the Ontario Northland Railway's fleet of FP7As has been repainted yellow, but retaining the provincial and Indian markings. On Jul 7 the ONR's NORTHLANDER ran in two sections, Timmins-Toronto and North Bay-Toronto. This frequently happens as this TEE trainset only holds 114 people in its three cars. The diner has to be the best in North America (better than the RGZ!). Snack items are served at your seat. (To visit the ONR maintenance facilities in North Bay, stop by their main office and sign a release. Bob Moore handles this function. CN engines are service there, and their coach repair shops are restoring their older passenger equipment. A few Alco switchers work in the yards.)

Trains 273/274 and 277/278 are no longer mixed trains. The Hearst-Nakina run is covered with an SW 1200 and a 1919 coach-combine. The Sioux Lookout-Thunderbay (Needling Yards) train sports a GP-9, box car for larger items such as boats, and a 1919 coach-combine-mail car. Yes, the Royal Mail is still handled by train to certain remote locations. The mixed train to Churchill and the one to Lynn Lake are still true mixed trains. The bet is that 273/274 and 277/278 will be dropped in the fall by VIA, as VIA must pay to operate these trains without benefit of freight revenue. (You can get to the CN Neebling Yards for this ride for 75¢ by taking bus #10 across the street from the VIA station--an 8-mile trip.

VIA's ridership is up 5% to 8 million (out of a total population of 24 million). If Amtrak did that well they would be carrying 80 million people per year.

This year may be the last for the Greater Winnipeg Water District's Sunday run to Waugh. This summer they were using a 1935 Mack Railcar and trailer.

RDC-1 #6124 was badly damaged, and was stored in the Winnipeg Transcona Yards, where it joined three ex-Milwaukee Road big domes, the PRAIRIE DOG special locomotive and cars, and four VIA-CN official cars "Sandford Fleming", "Coureur de Bois", "David Thompson", and "Pierre de la Verendyre." There is also a liberal assortment of Budd Vista-Domes and CP-Budd-VIA sleepers and coaches.

On Jul 11 the CANADIAN carried the Governor General's cars to Winnipeg; he was not using them at the time. This train was running 20 cars with them, and

would again run 20 cars from Calgary to Vancouver (a diner and two sleepers were added at Calgary).

Steamer 1201, from the Ottawa Museum collection, has steamed its way from Ottawa to North Bay for the 100th Anniversary of the advent of railroading there.

A major wheat train derailment was seen in July near Thunder Bay on the CP main line, and washouts occurred on the CN Kinghorn Subdivision. There has been above-average rainfall in that region, and a rash of accidents as a result. My mixed train was the first train to go to Sioux Lookout in a week (God is good to railfans, as this train runs only twice a week).

The HUDSON BAY tri-weekly train to Churchill still provides a special menu for its tour groups, and a first class lounge for all passengers. Locals told me that this train is longer than it has been in 20 years. A National Geographic Special about the Polar Bears touched off a rush to get up there. To see bears and avoid swarms of insects, go in the fall; otherwise, bring plenty of insect repellant.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

NEW YORK'S MTA in August agreed to take over the Hudson, Harlem and New Haven commuter lines from Conrail, after the government agreed that $65 million would be allocated for takeover costs. The lines will thus not come under the aegis of the Commuter Services Corporation. Still pending are decisions on who will run the present Conrail lines in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

SAN DIEGO TROLLEY celebrated its first anniversary in July. On Jul 19 public ceremonies were held, and again on Jul 26. On the 20th an employees' party was thrown. Commuters were given key rings and punchouts on board the trollies by a hired performer called Trollee the Tramp. Two more LRV cars were expected to arrive Jul 20 from Germany.

LOS ANGELES AREA will receive $62.5 million in federal transit funding, DOT Secretary Lewis announced Jul 27. The sum includes $9.3 million to finish the preliminary engineering studies for the proposed Wilshire (Metrorail) subway. The Wilshire line is to run from Union Station downtown, along Wilshire Boulevard, and to Hollywood and North Hollywood. At about the same time, L.A. officials were holding a public hearing on the exact route of the planned line, conscious that their decisions made now will have a very important impact on the future development of the area. One of the most recent design changes includes an extension along Vermont Avenue and Sunset Blvd to form a rectangle of subway and elevated line in Hollywood, Beverly Hills and L.A. proper. It also shifts the line to North Hollywood away from the Hollywood Freeway and aims it directly north from the station at Santa Monica Blvd and Fairfax Avenue. The L.A. Times reports that the availability of federal funds to help build the $2.1 billion system depends on the successful outcome of Secretary Lewis's plan to raise the federal gasoline tax from 4¢ to 8¢ per gallon. This will not be considered by Congress until next year's (1984) budget is worked upon. The remainder of the $62.5 million goes into new buses and bus maintenance.

A BOSTON ADDENDUM: Of the 32 RDC's rebuilt by Morrison-Knudsen, only 19 will have the older walkover, high-back seats which once were standard on the B&M Budds. The rest will be low-back, fixed-position transit-style seats. The three test cars mentioned last issue will remain in service in Boston. As for future rebuilds: the funding is available and there will soon be a session of open bidding on the remaining 2/3 of the fleet to be rebuilt. Thus, it is possible that 1/3 of the fleet will be "Boise Budds" and the rest from some other manufacturer.

THE CHICAGO CTA four months ago closed four stations on the Jackson Park rapid transit line, but now says it will reopen three of them--King, Cottage Grove and University--by Christmas as part of a redevelopment of the 63rd St. corridor.

SAVING SAN FRANCISCO'S cable cars (raising money to rebuild them) was helped along early in August when six large Japanese companies each donated $100,000 to the city for the purpose. The companies, Namco Ltd (owner of the Pacman video game license), Mitsubishi, Kikkoman, Mitsui, Nissan and Sumitomo, brought the total of private donations to the city up to $8.6 million, out of $10 million being sought. The cable cars will be shut down Sep 20 for extensive rebuilding.

PITTSBURGH WILL BUY 55 new LRV streetcars for a total of $53.3 million. The contract with Siemens-Duwag was signed on Jul 14.

THE WISCONSIN DOT should take an active role in funding a commuter rail system for Southeastern Wisconsin, according to Robert BallouJr, president of the Wisconsin Association of RR Passengers. In a Jul 18 letter to Owen Ayres, secretary of the state DOT, Ballou asked for the DOT's assistance in making the commuter rail system recently proposed by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission a reality. The SEWRPC transit alternatives plan recommends that commuter rail service be started on one or more of three routes radiating out of the Milwaukee Amtrak station (Milwaukee to Kenosha, Grafton and Oconomowoc). The plan recommends that the route or routes chosen be given a 1-year ridership trial.

CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN has offered to sell its commuter operation to the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority.

THE BUDD COMPANY has been given a $40,000 grant for a feasibility study of a mag-lev transit line from downtown Milwaukee to O'Hare Airport in Chicago. Funds came from local and federal sources.

SOUTH SHORE LINE in Chicago plans to have the first six of 36 new Japanese-build commuter cars in service in September.

DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER NY is initiating a reduced fare program for its downtown commuters. A low fare of 25¢ will allow rides between 11am and 2pm Monday thru Friday within the Inner Loop and on State St to Factory St (Kodak office). The low-fare program is on a 6-month trial evaluation period.

SAN FRANCISCO GOT an UMTA grant of $12.5 million for rebuilding the cable cars, the grant being announced in Washington on Jul 1.

RIDING THE U&MV SESQUICENTENNIAL LIMITED

by Alfred Gorney

On the first three weekends of July, the Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter of NRHS operated eight passenger runs on the Delaware Otsego System's new northern division of the New York, Susquehanna & Western out of Utica NY.

The trains were made up of four ex-Auto Train full-length dome cars, numbered 510, 520, 524 and 515, and pulled by two Alco C-420 locomotives--#2000, a low-nose unit painted Susquehanna yellow and black with silver trucks (ex-L&N 1312); and high-nose Alco #2002 in maroon (ex-V&M, L.I. 221).

The route began on Schuyler Street in Utica and ran up the center of the street for a mile before going on a private right of way. It thin proceeded south thru the suburban towns of the Sauquoit Valley to Willowvale, where it began its 13-mile, 1.55% grade run to Paris station. The route climbed along the edge of the east wall of the valley and along the rippling waters of Sauquoit Creek, thru scenic areas not seen from roads. From Paris station to Sangerfield it rolled thru rolling farm country, spotted with pastures of startled cows and fields of corn and wheat crops.

The U&MV will be running fall foliage trips on Oct 16 & 17 over this route to Norwich and Binghamton with domes and open-window coaches.

THE RIO GRANDE: A TRIP TO TREASURE

by Walt Stringer

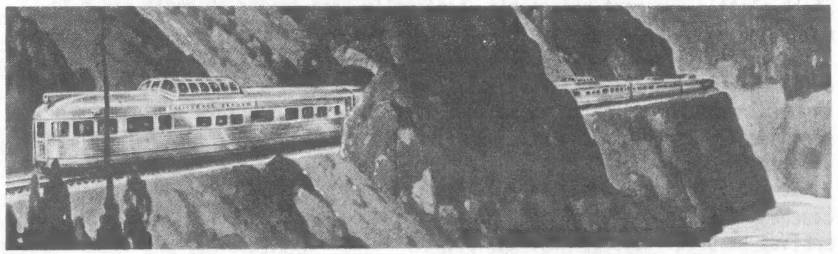
This year's NRHS Annual Convention was held in mid-July in Colorado, with the headquarters in Denver. Conventioneers were able to enjoy UP steam, narrow gauge railroading, the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, and an extravagant banquet featuring the down-to-earth humor of Charles Bradshaw, owner of the Silverton line.

I rode the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, DRGW #18, from Salt Lake to Denver on Sunday, July 11. The train was about 20 minutes late westbound at Provo on Saturday evening, but arrived Salt Lake only 13 down. As always, it was a pleasure to see the Vista-Dome streamliner, altho the motive power proved to be a disappointment during the week--only one F-unit booster was operable on the trips of July 10-11, and on the 12-13th and 15-16th trips, two GP40s replaced the F units entirely--all three were shopped at Burnham with mechanical ailments.

Before leaving Salt Lake, a brief tour was interesting. UP has 20-25 units and 15 cabooses stored--the lineup of buggies was amusing with all the safety slogans (my favorite: "Have Train, Will Travel"). The PIONEER laying over Saturday had F40 #206 (which needs a paint job), sleeper 2980 "Pine Fern", Amcafe 20050, coaches 39934 and 31026. UP business cars 102 & 110 lay at the UP station also, and the operator at Grant Tower showed me his CTC Board, which controls the interlockings near the UP and DRGW stations, as well as pointing out the old WP passenger main which the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR used to go west from the DRGW station (a switch has been removed, thus severing the route). Also in Salt Lake I saw steam generator 250, an old DRGW steam tender--the west end spare for the CZ.

The RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR at 7am on Sunday looked like this: GP40 #3116, steam car 253 (ex-Alco PB), F7B 5763, combine 1231, diner "Silver Banquet", dome coaches "Silver Colt" and "Silver Pony" (Glenwood-reserved), coaches "Silver Pine" and "Silver Aspen", dome coaches "Silver Bronco" and "Silver Mustang", and dome observation "Silver Sky".

In the small waiting room at the south end of the old depot, tickets were sold, baggage checked, and the conductor held forth at a table near the door doing check-in. As usual, DRGW sells a small ticket with no receipt for on-line travel, using the old ZEPHYR coupon books for interline only. About 80 boarded, as steam hissed from various outlets along the trainline. The Ogden van arrived at 7:25, full with eight people, having waited there until 6:50 for the PIONEER.



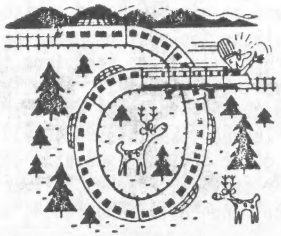
We left on time and rolled nicely down the valley towards Provo, but were put in the hole at Riverton for a westbound freight, costing us 10-15 minutes. I was enjoying breakfast at the time--Rio Grande's current menus are dated April 1982 and are nearly identical to past versions. For $3.50 I enjoyed the French Toast and contemplated the now-unique experience of a cooked meal in a diner on a train with five domes and an observation. I wondered if the other patrons in the nearly-full diner realized the rarity of the experience.

One DRGW steward, a Mr. Sweed, retired recently and was given a special dinner on the west end of a recent ZEPHYR run. I'm told the passengers on board also participated in the special meal. What did we miss, I wonder? (Also, for information, the UP diner recently purchased is used only for backup, since it has inadequate pantry storage space for a full train.

We left Provo 15 minutes late at 8:35, passed the UP yard where the recent 3985 steam trips turned, and headed for the Wasatch as the clouds cleared. The ascent of Spanish Fork Canyon was stunning. Fellow travelers Steve Hovey and John Arbuckle joined me in a vestibule up front to watch and listen as 4,750 horses pulled our "Silver Twister" around the curves and loops towards Soldier Summit. The lush green valley and colored hills stood out perfectly against a blue sky as we passed Thistle at 9:05 and finally crested the summit at 9:55, then headed down the Price River Canyon, past Castle Gate, and on into Helper at 10:39 to change engine crews, drop one passenger and board eight.

Westbound freight 201 was in the yard (this Sunday was very quiet on the Grande), and we left at 10:42 for a fast run across the so-called moonscape--the intriguing desert of Eastern Utah. At 11:57 we stopped on the north track, which serves the attractive Green River depot, and a 12-car westbound freight rolled past on the other main behind two engines.

The run to Thompson thru the curves and hills of the rocky desert took 32 minutes, and after a brief stop at the "Gateway to Moab", a small green and



white depot-residence in the little oasis of Thompson, we rolled again at 12:30. It was time for lunch, and the $5 expense for the complete Salisbury Steak platter was most reasonable, especially when topped by apple pie a la mode (for another $2, of course). The diner was a bit warm but not full, and I was just finishing as we entered Ruby Canyon, one of the most spectacular of the Rio Grande collection of visual delights. Despite the 90° heat outside the red rocks and dramatic formations appeared perfectly thru our clean (in most cases) dome windows. We even noted an eagle along the riverbank of the Colorado.

Coming into Grand Junction I enjoyed a few more minutes in the rear-facing couches in the observation (the domes do heat up under the brilliant sun), and arrival at Grand Junction was at 1:52pm. This midway point has the rest stop, service stop, crew-change point, and even checked baggage service. I went over to the little shopping mall and found it devoid of stores. The one restaurant seemed okay, tho, as its occupants watched the ZEPHYR's passengers stretch their legs.

Departure was at 2:13 after 20 or so boarded. The rail yard held one assembled eastbound coal drag and miscellaneous units and cars, and we caught several yellow boards as a westbound 8-car freight got in the clear for us near Grand Mesa. The afternoon heat brought thundershowers to the Grand Valley, but it had no effect on our progress.

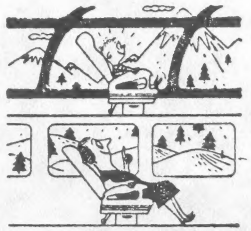
Several boarded at Rifle at 3:31, and our arrival at Glenwood Springs, where 180 were due to board, came at 4:01. The large group was boarded quickly and we left at 4:06, heading into Glenwood Canyon. About midway thru the canyon I saw cleanup operations from a recent slide, and at Dotsero our scanners

picked up two nearby freights lurking in sidings awaiting our passage. We also heard our conductor talk to Dispatcher #3 concerning two pieces of lost luggage back at Glenwood.

The Moffat Line is, of course, spectacular, and the ZEPHYR rolled easily thru canyons and valleys, tunnels and meadows, as the crowd of tourists and railfans ooh-ed and ahh-ed as much as at a traditional July 4th fireworks display. Gore Canyon, Byer Canyon, State Line Bridge--storied places on the main-line "Through the Rockies--Not Around Them" (as the diner checks still say).

We met a westbound freight at Bond, and were underway behind a new engine crew at 5:43. The Glenwood crowd was a gas in the domes as pictures were taken and weekend escapade stories were exchanged. At 6:39 we passed Kremmling, located in a brilliantly-lit Alpine meadow.

I decided to head for dinner, expecting a small wait (the rumor mill had already advised that the steward's number system was in the 40's). Upon arrival in the diner, I found a major disappointment--a converter in "Silver Banquet" had failed, killing the lights in the car. With some passengers still unfed, the steward had shut down. He graciously served me a turkey sandwich to go, and I raced back to "Silver Sky", where I found the lounge shutting down, and got the last Pepsi. Thus provided for, I enjoyed an impromptu dome dinner on my lap in "Silver Sky".



At Sulphur we met westbound freight 701, and made a quick stop at Granby at 7:23 to drop four passengers. Possibly due to insufficient motive power, and certainly due to freight interference, we had been late all day, and it never got better as we headed east. At Winter Park we overtook an eastbound coal train with helpers, and plunged into Moffat Tunnel at 8:02:40, exiting at 8:12:45--a 10-minute, 5-second run of 6.2 subterranean miles. From Moffat down I was in the vestibule, jacket on in the chilly but pure, cool air, watching the front range unfold. Our engineer was willing to highball and let the train roll wherever possible, using dynamics and even air when needed. After a fast roll thru the valley at Rollins, it was reassuring to see and smell brakeshoe smoke behind "Silver Sky." Thru the tunnels we went, looking at Boulder Creek Dam and the snowy peaks of Rocky Mountain National Park, and finally the lights of Boulder, Longmont and Denver on the plains stretching east. It was dark as we rounded the loop near Coal Creek Canyon and passed Rocky siding, and there was another westbound freight in the hole at the next siding.

A bit of weariness began to creep over the train as our beautiful journey grew near its end in the railyards near the skyline of downtown Denver. After the quick stop at the BN crossing, we eased to a stop at 9:55pm, 25 minutes late. Several hundred people cascaded thru the station and walkways, goodbyes were exchanged, and 15 minutes later I heard the equipment rumble off to the coach yard for servicing.

As always, the ZEPHYR is a vintage experience. Still, there are occasional comments about discontinuance, and who's to say that DRGW can't someday join Amtrak. In other words, ride the ZEPHYR every time you can, and treasure each ride.

A HOLIDAY JAUNT ON THE CALTRAIN by Jim Russell

IT has been a long time (see RTN 57) since RTN took a close look at the SP San Francisco Peninsula commute line. Since that time, the line has been taken over by Caltrans and the run has been dubbed the "Caltrain". Memorial Day (May 31) was a good time to ride it, along with visiting correspondent Adron Hall.

On that cold, overcast Monday we caught train 34, the noon departure from San Francisco (we and a number of others almost missed it, due to a slow and late S.F. Muni trolley bus connection from Market Street). On holidays and Sundays there are nine trains each way, compared to 23 on weekdays. Our train consisted of engine 3186 and three double-decker cars. In the S.F. yard we saw car 3702, the third of three repainted in the new Caltrans paint scheme of platinum mist, blue and red, with a rainbow stripe of red and two shades of blue-green (see RTN 245).

As we reached Burlingame, the sun broke thru brightly. We noticed that the Redwood City station is merely a trailer, and the Palo Alto station is being refurbished. We left San Jose at 2pm on train 53, composed of all-repainted equipment: engine 3187 and cars 3700 and 3701. From the interior, the trains give no

indication of the exterior work, but from the outside the new paint is much livelier than the dull SP gray.

Our arrival in San Fran-cisco was on time. The relatively new S.F. station is about the right size for this commuter operation; it's modern and pleasant. However, extension of the trains to Market St. (near the Ferry Building), as is being discussed, would be an enormous improvement.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

(Page 12:) On the left, SDP engine 3208 adds to the variety of locomotives (mostly GP's) at the S.F. facility. (Lower photo, p. 12:) Interior of one of the double-decker commute cars. (Page 13:) Top: The editor's train, with the new paint job, is on the right, and a train with the former gray paint is on the left in this view at the San Jose station.

(Center:) At a ticket window in the recently-constructed 4th & Townsend station in S.F. This modern structure a few years ago replaced the venerable mission-style station that stood at 3rd & Townsend.

(Bottom:) Passengers wait to board the 4:00pm train from S.F. on Memorial Day. Holiday patronage was light, but would be heavier everyday if the line terminated at a more convenient S.F. location, such as the Ferry Building.

SP logo on current timetable.

RTN photos.

STEAM RETURNS TO THE WHITE PASS & YUKON

by Sylvia Blishak

PART TWO - CONCLUSION

According to Boynton, the rails we were now riding on had once carried trains between Alamoso and Durango, Colorado; and were later torn up and shipped north.

Two TV reporters, on assignment for both ABC and STET, identified me as the only real "railfan" aboard, interviewed me, asking about the buttons commemorating other steam excursions I'd taken. Later, after interviewing the engineer, they talked their way into the cab for a ride down the mountain!

The sun came out as we headed for Lake Bennett and lower elevation; #73 stopped chuffing and started sizzling. I went out to the rear platform, where I met Barbara Dedman, owner of a photo shop in Skagway. Barbara, who was juggling several cameras, explained, "I'm taking photos to use for postcards to sell in my shop." When the railroad wanted to do a press release on Engine #73 (while it was still being restored and not in photogenic condition), Barbara was able to delve into her files for the 1947 photo of the (then) brand new engine.

Back inside to warm up beside the stove, I heard Boynton's tale of some railroad cars and engines of meter gauge (wider than narrow gauge) which the U.S. Government requisitioned for use on the White Pass during World War II. (The equipment had originally been destined for shipment to South America.) Boynton's job was to narrow them down to fit the narrow-gauge tracks, a project which never really satisfied him, as the cars were top-heavy and the engines tended to derail.

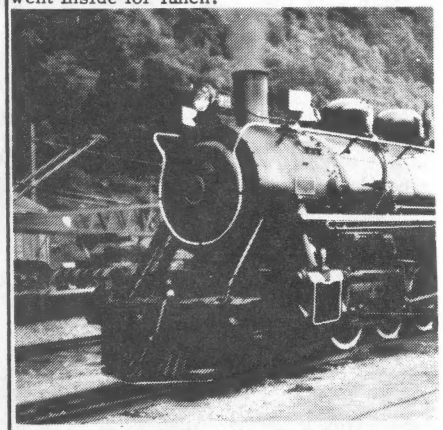
At one point in his career, Boynton shoveled coal into the helper steam engines that climbed between Skagway and the summit; after the helper arrived back in Skagway, he took off his fireman's hat and worked on cars and equipment until quitting time.

Engine #73 and its kin, originally coal-burners, were converted to oil in 1951, as coal had to be shipped all the way from Vancouver. Boynton remembered with a grin, "The coal-burners had more personality than oil-burners. One thing you learned never to do was to stick a cold shovel into the firebox to even out the coals --they'd cool and form into a big glob that jammed everything up!"

How, I wondered, did one even out the coals?

"You learned to toss the new coal in so it would push the burning coal to the back of the firebox." he replied. "Of course, when the engine was really chugging, the coals would bounce around and kind of level themselves out!"

We pulled into Lake Bennett for our lunch stop. The eastbound passenger with two diesels, having completed its lunch stop, was just pulling out and seemed dwarfed by the huge mountains as it skirted the lake. The Skagway-bound passenger was already loaded, but stayed awhile on the adjacent track so the tourists could shoot pictures of #73. As the other train whistled off, the passengers from our train went inside for lunch.

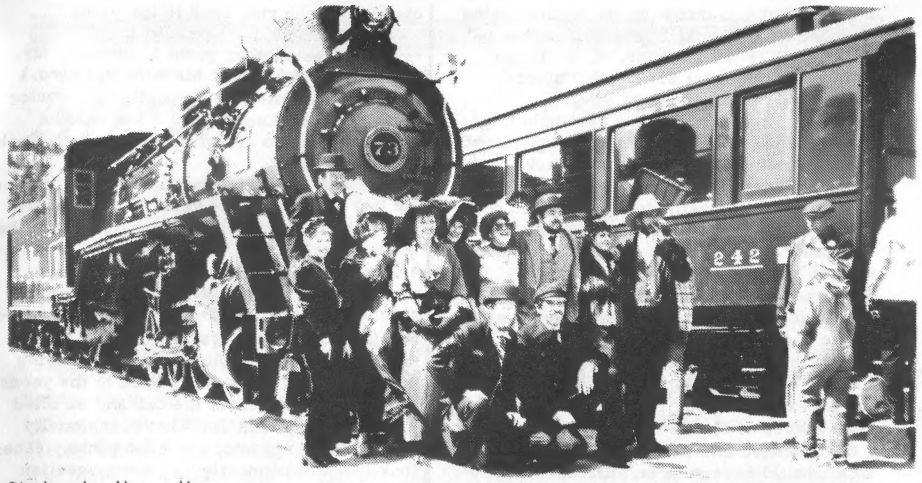


I rarely passup a chance for a meal. But this was a railfan's dream come true --a steam engine, a scenic backdrop, and sunny weather! Not only were there no "photo lines," THERE WAS NOT ANOTHER HUMAN BEING IN SIGHT! I took pictures from every angle; and I missed lunch.

Later, thru Barbar Dedman, I managed an introduction to the engine crew. Chief Engineer J.D. True, who is number one on the railroad's seniority roster, was running the engine. J.D. has 41 years of railroading behind him. He was promoted to engineer in 1945, two years before the before the brand-new #73 was delivered. "And I took #73 over the pass behind a rotary snow-plow in 1962; my last run with the engine before she was mothballed. The snow-plow still is." He pointed to the rotary, part of a static display next to the lakeshore.

"Did you think you'd ever be running a steam engine again?" I asked.

"No, I didn't, but I'm real pleased about it," he grinned. "She rides a little rough over the tracks, tho--or maybe I've just



Photos by the author

forgotten how it used to be now that I'm used to those diesels."

I asked J.D. how he'd happened to become a railroader. "I was a farm boy in Northwest Arkansas when White Pass offered me a job. I took it, thinking I'd just make me some money awhile, and go on back to the farm. But once I got started, I never wanted to go back, no siree!"

J. D. thinks that the engine-restoration crew did a good job. Having been retired at the early age of 16 years, #73 was in fairly good shape. "But that system that superheats the steam is always needing adjustments," he admitted.

Jim Hamilton, the fireman for #73, is about half J. D.'s age. Jim comes from a railfan family, he told me. His brother, Frederick J. Hamiltom, is Advertising Sales Manager for Trains Magazine. Jim invited me up into the cab so I could take some photos, then left me all alone there! I marveled over all the dials and gauges, and had a fantasy of surprising everyone by pulling back on the throttle and taking the engine on a little spin singlehanded. My Walter Mitty dream was interrupted when Mrs. J.D. True broke a bottle of champagne over the cow-catcher while all 80 passengers and 9 crew members toasted the engine with more champagne. Then it was time to head back over the mountains to Skagway.

Back inside "Lake Lebarge," I found myself sitting next to a pleasant, mild-mannered gentleman with a Canadian accent. I asked if he was from Whitehorse. "Yes. I'm one of the new employees on the railroad," he confessed. "I've only been with them 3 1/2 years."

I asked what his job was. "Well, I'm the president," he replied.

Shaking hands with Mr. Thomas King, I thanked him for the invitation, which had given me a chance to be part of this special event.

King was pleased with the steam engine. "Number 73 has really attracted a lot of attention, and is getting lots of ink! Canadian National Geographic is doing an article on it, Alaska Magazine has a reporter here, and on the first run a couple of weeks ago (a similar inagural from Whitehorse to Carcross for press and Canadian employees) we had a German TV network crew. The BBC is doing a special, too!"

"Are you a long-time railfan?" I asked.

"No! I really knew nothing about railroads three years ago when I came here--I'd been with a freight company. But I did know how to read a balance sheet. The company was in financial difficulties then, but we've turned it around."

King explained that White Pass and Yukon Corporation Limited is a Canadian company (not American, as I'd assumed) and that the railroad now only accounts for about 15% of the corporation's business. "But, unlike most railroads, we want passengers!" he emphasized. While the railroad was built in 1898 between Skagway and Whitehorse to transport men and materials to the Klondike goldfields, today White Pass is a group of inter-related companies. "We have a marine division with tanker/comtainer ships, an ore-handling terminal, frieght trucking, petroleum, and pipelines," King explained. "But the railroad is holding up its end of things fairly well now. In fact, we have some new diesels on order from Bomardier -- that's the company that built the New York subway cars and caused all the controversy, since it is a Canadian firm." While one might

assume that a narrow-gauge engine, being smaller than standard, would cost less to build, such is not the case, King claims. "They're costing us $1,250,000 apiece--twice as much as standard gauge!"

Later, I went back to the vestibule to get a better view of the scenery. I chatted with a young man who works for an Alaska State Assemblyman. "The U.S. would be very unwise to let the rails deteriorate and be abandoned," he opined. "It is so much more economical to replace a few railroad ties than to build even an unpaved highway. (He gestured towards the new White Pass highway which cuts a scar up the opposite side of the canyon--it is graveled.) Detroit should retool and build railroad equipment instead of laying employees off! Most of the investment in the rail network has already been made; it should be protected!"

Encouraged that someone in the political field should have such an attitude, I asked how things are going with the Alaska Railroad. (While it is currently federally funded, Reaganomics wants to stop footing the bill.)

"The State has said, 'Give it to us, we'll run it.' But the federal government says, 'You'll have to buy it from us,'" he laughed.

A few local people with cameras waited at the Skagway yards. We steamed on through and stopped at the depot, where a croud of tourists waited to greet us.

I got off and walked up towards the engine, and waved up to J.D., who waved back. I realized that when you want something up here in the "Last Frontier," hanging back gets you nowhere--you have to go for it.

"Hey, J.D.!" I yelled. "How about letting me hitch a cab ride back to the yards?"

"Sure," he said. "Come on up!"

There was another guest in the cab, Mr. Mark Lee. (I had met his wife on board.) J.D. had inherited Lee's position as senior engineer when Lee retired a few months before. The two are great friends, and look great deal alike.

Fireman Jim Hamilton told me that between the two of them, these veteran railroaders combined over 80 years of experience on the White Pass!

The cab was neat and clean, and quite warm from the firebox. Lots of hissing, simmering, and chuffing as the engine jolted and jarred over the tracks--it does ride hard. J.D. let me blow a grade-crossing whistle, and then we were back at the yards.

I climbed down from the cab and strolled past the idling diesels. They occasionally rattled their radiator air inlet vents. (These look like independently swiveling venetian blind slats, and are designed to close completely to preventing sub-zero air from getting inside.)

As I began the hike back to town, the overcast was lifting a bit, and for the first time I could see the top of Face Mountain, which looks like a bearded Sourdough gazing at the sky.

I won't forget Face Mountain, or Box Canyon, or the nights that didn't get dark, or engine #73.

But most of all, I'll remember the hospitable folks I met on board. Thier willingness to share their knowledge and historical perspectives with me made this much more than an "ordinary" steam trip!

CARS & CONSISTS

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, Grand Forks ND Jul 31/Aug 1: engines 367 (on at Grand Forks), 374, 366; cars 1133, 39915, 31038, 34078, 34101, 38012, 33016, 31010, 34001, 32034, 32052, 32026, (on at Grand Forks, from Amtrak display:) 31028, 33022, 38108, 34087, private car "Silver Foot", private slpr-obs "Susan Marie" with EMPIRE BUILDER drumhead.

*CAPITOL LIMITED, train 440, McKeesport PA Jul 12: engine 277; cars 1230, 1236, 2444 "Magnolia Grove", 2050 slumbercoach, 4628, 4724, Amflt II lounge 28000. Same, train 441, Washington Jul 16: engine 266; cars 1211, 1248, 2444 "Magnolia Grove", slumbercoach 2050, 4715, 4711, 4724, Amflt II lounge 28005.

*BANKERS, train 141, Washington Jul 16: engine 920 (AEM-7); cars Amclub 20137, 21043, 21033, 21010, 21853, 21062.

*EAGLE, train 21, Texarkana Jul 26: engines 390, 329, 372; cars 32056, 33008, 34083 (thru cars Chicago-L.A.); 31006, 31041, 34070, 34018, 38028.

*White Pass & Yukon tourist train, Jun 13: diesel engines 98 & 97; cars 101 baggage boxcar, parlor car with cupola 216, parlor cars 280 "Lake Dease", 270 "Lake Kathleen", 274 "Lake Primrose", 242 "Lake Teslin", 234 "Lake Cowley".

*CANADIAN, VIA train 1, Calgary May 12: engines VIA 6569, CP 1407; cars 613, 103, 109, 504, 5703, "Iroquois", "Enterprise", "Entwhistle", "Elrose", 1361, "Chateau LaSalle", "Chateau Verennes", dome obs "Riding Mountain Park".

"The Panic Box" will appear again next issue.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK FUNDING PROGRESS: NARP this month (August) reported as follows on the progress of the Amtrak appropriations bill thru Congress: "On Jul 28, the House Subcommittee on Transportation reported out the Fiscal 83 transportation appropriations bill. The Administration had recommended $600 million for Amtrak, but the Subcommittee, chaired by Adam Benjamin, approved an appropriation of $788 million, the maximum amount which could be appropriated under last year's appropriations bill. The markup report suggested report language giving Amtrak greater flexibility in charging for food and beverages, and suggested bill language directing Amtrak to use $25 million in anticipated Fiscal 82 carryover money for rehabilitation of the Indianapolis-Cincinnati-Shelbyville line. The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to consider the bill around Aug 19, and indications are that the committee will approve the Subcommittee bill. The bill is expected on the floor of the House after Labor Day (Sep 6). The Senate Committee and Subcommittee should take up the measure shortly thereafter".....

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NEW TELEVISION SHOW, the "Real People", has its opening program on Sep 22, featuring Amtrak, as reported last issue. For filming of the 90-min show, extra cars were attached to the SUNSET LIMITED out of Los Angeles on Jul 25. The consist of that train was: engines 253, 709 & 711 (all very clean); cars 1156, 39910, 31036, 32043, 38023, 39940, 34036, (thru cars to Chicago:) 34037, 33015, 32036, (extra cars, to Chicago:) 32020 slpr, 32002 slpr, 31043 bag-coach, 39917 Hi-level transition coach, 2995 "Pine Brook" 10/6 slpr, 20233 Amdinette, 10,000 Amtrak business car. At San Antonio the special cars, along with the regular thru cars, were switched to the northbound EAGLE to Chicago. That train's consist was engines 372, 329, 390; cars 32036, 33015, 34027 (thru cars); 38028, 34018, 34070, 31041, 31006 plus the seven extra cars. The observation platform of car 10,000 was used by the film crew at each station stop.....

AMTRAK'S "ANYWHERE" FARE, the $225 special roundtrip or one-way fare, good thru Oct 30, will be good for sleeper travel also, effective Aug 30.....

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC was the subject of a highly critical cover story in the Aug 16 issue of Forbes magazine, the conservative business magazine. The publication charged that present SP chairman Ben Biaggini is leading the SP into bankruptcy thru mismanagement (SP had very unfavorable business performance in the last two quarters). Biaggini was furious about the article, which lowered some of SP's credit ratings. In an interview with the San Francisco Examiner (Aug 8) Biaggini said the article may be "blackmail" just to get the SP to advertise in Forbes. SP has not done so nor has it allowed Forbes reporters around since the magazine ran an unfavorable article on SP three years ago.....

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GRAND FORKS STATION in North Dakota was the scene of an Amtrak equipment display and tree-planting dedication of a future station on Jul 31. Amtrak said about 6000 people showed up, including dignitaries James H. English, Amtrak's VP-Government Affairs, Senator Mark Andrews, and the mayor of Grand Forks. The station, to be completed next December, will have an 1100-foot platform, and its location will cut a half-hour of running time off the EMPIRE BUILDER's schedule. Equipment on display included F40 engine 367, Superliner cars 31028, 33022, 38018, 34087, conventional car "Silver Foot", and two exhibit baggage cars. (See also "Cars & Consists" on page 16).....

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE recently wrote an 85-page, biased and negative report on Amtrak (noted last issue) which recommended cutting out all long-distance trains and reducing Amtrak to a corridor-only operation. We haven't seen the study itself, but NARP said it contained some contradictory statements which tended to wipe out its own conclusions. Unfortunately, the New York Times has picked up this half-baked study and published a long editorial supporting its biased views. We have reprinted the editorial in its entirety in "Quotes of the Week" (page 21). Other newspapers always pick up the Times's editorials, and so far we have seen the Arizona Republic's editorial of Aug 10 which repeats the story ("Supporters of Amtrak argue that passenger trains are more fuel-efficient. ... It's not true of long-haul passenger trains, which run almost empty.") NARP's Assistant Director, Barry Williams, wrote a response to the editorial, which the Times published as a letter under the title "Long-Distance Trains Are Good for Amtrak" on Aug 12. Said Williams: "Your July 31 editorial 'Drop the Trains' reveals hasty and uncritical acceptance of a recent Congressional Budget Office report which relied on two-year-old date to crtiicize Amtrak. Amtrak's long-distance trains generally have a stronger revenue-to-cost ratio than its short-distance corricor trains. Even the C.B.O. report admits this. It was primarily long-distance traffic growth which allowed Amtrak's revenues to grow 16% last year, twice that of the airlines, and allowed passenger-miles to increase 4% in a year when all other transport modes posted declines. Cost-cutting and wage concessions, all achieved subsequent to the C.B.O. research, have further strengthened long-distance trains' cost-effectiveness. Dropping them would make any surviving corridors incredibly inefficient and costly to operate. Public subsidy for mass transportation is a legitimate issue about which reasonable people may disagree. But the debate is not furthered by poorly researched journalism. Before your next Amtrak editorial, you might get out and ride some trains--or, at the very least, walk over to Penn Station or Grand Central Terminal to get a fresh perspective on the subject. Maybe then you will quit referring to trains as little-used frills and to train riders as romanticists".....

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A SILLY CONTEST was held by Amtrak for employees in July. Ten "Mystery Voices" were heard on a toll-free employee line, one voice each day, with an announcer imitating the voice of some celebrity of the past or present. Employees were eligible to win such prizes as a cordless telephone or T-shirts by submitting the correct names. The names were: Walter Cronkite, Humphrey Bogart, Franklin Roosevelt, Mae West, James Cagney, W.C. Fields, Richard Nixon, John Wayne, Winston Churchill, and Gary Cooper (playing Rhet Butler in "Gone With the Wind"). Contest winners were to be announced Aug 16. Despite its corniness, the contest undoubtedly achieved its aims of making employees feel closer to the corporation.....

AMTRAK IS SELLING 131 more "surplus" passenger cars, stored at 15 different locations around the system. It is not known as we go to press whether any dome cars are among those put up for sale.....

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NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD line will likely be reduced to single track, unless saner heads prevail. Amtrak has allocated funds to studying the effect of ripping out one of the two tracks, and altho the rail corporation said late in July that no definite decision had been made, it also expressed belief that the line could be operated more efficiently, maintaining the same levels of ridership now served, after conversion to a single, high-grade track. Amtrak said that present ridership levels do not justify maintaining two tracks on the line. Concerned rail supporters and legislators, as they are learning of the plan, are beginning to complain to Amtrak.....

HAMMOND, INDIANA STATION is now completed, and will open for service on Sep 11, 1982.....

RAIL SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT was passed by the House by voice vote on Aug 12. This bill provides continued funding for the North East Corridor Improvement Project, with $80 million earmarked for upgrading of track between Philadelphia and Atlantic City and New York and Buffalo. Amtrak is to perform the Atlantic City line work after the bulk of its regular NEC trackwork is done next year. The work and the funding are contingent on New Jersey's selection of an operator to provide daily roundtrip rail service between Philadelphia and Atlantic City.....

TORONTO-PT. HURON-CHICAGO service is expected to begin Oct 31, operated jointly by Amtrak and VIA, using one Amfleet consist and one VIA Tempo train set. Toronto departure will probably be at 8:15am, connecting to train 5 in Chicago, except on Sundays when it leaves Toronto at 1pm. Chicago departure should be 10:30am.....

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CHICAGO AND NORTHWESTERN passenger station in Chicago as it presently looks is shown in this photo by Jack Ferry. Building is scheduled to be torn down to make way for an office building.....

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI will have an Amtrak equipment display on Aug 28, open to the public from 11am to 6pm. A diesel locomotive and four Superliner cars will be on display--coach, diner, sleeper and Sightseer lounge.....

AMTRAK RESERVATIONS OFFICES became less efficient in handling incoming calls in June, as the number of summer calls began to mount. Percentage of calls handled was 93.4, or more than 3% less than in May. But Amtrak noted that it was far better than the 77% of June 1981, and above the corporate goal of 90.2%.....

EMPIRE SERVICE TRAINS will make special stops in Syracuse for the NY State Fair which runs Aug 28-Sep 6. The MAPLE LEAF, EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS and the NIAGARA RAINBOW will all stop at the special State Fair station, and free shuttle service will be provided to the fairgrouns entrance for Amtrak passengers.....

STATE OF CALIFORNIA and Amtrak have signed agreements for the renovation of nine stations in California and the improvement of a number of grade crossings as well as improved bus connections.....

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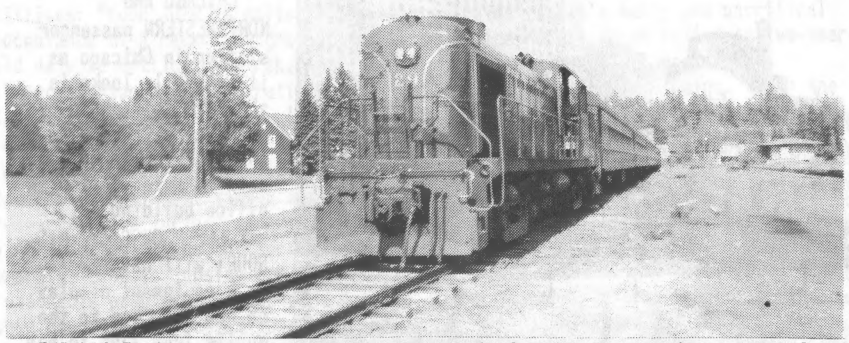
nine stations: Caltrans will spend $613,000 to improve stations at Martinez, Stockton, Riverbank, Merced, Fresno, Hanford and Wasco on the SAN JOAQUIN line, and Davis. Work will begin as early as next fall. A contract has also been signed to improve grade crossings along the SAN DIEGAN route, with Caltrans paying $1.4 million for improvements. The work will be completed within a year, and will allow trains between Orange and Santa Ana to meet and pass more quickly over the single track line there.....

ANOTHER RAILROAD STRIKE was averted since last issue, when on Jul 26 President Reagan appointed an emergency panel to look into the UTU dispute; Jul 30 was the day scheduled for a walkout, but now a 60-day cooling-off period prevails. Amtrak conductors, brakemen, firemen and baggagemen belong to that union.....

NEW COMPUTER TERMINALS were being installed in 108 more locations thruout the Amtrak system, starting Jul 23, mostly in smaller stations that previously had no computer terminal.....

DEDICATED BUS CONNECTIONS were established in late July between Phoenix and Flagstaff AZ for Amtrak passengers (Greyhound bus) and at Del Mar CA between the Amtrak station and the race track (Double Deck Bus Co.).....

NY TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT announced Jul 21 that the apparent low bidder to tear up the Adirondack Railway line between Remsen and Lake Placid is Varney Inc. of Windsor VT. The company will return to the state more than 40 miles of rail and related hardware and keep the rest as payment for its effort. The NY DOT said work on the northern section (Old Forge to Lake Placid) will begin in September "assuming no suitable operator has been found to complete the required rehabilitation of the line without state funds and who can provide a non-subsidized freight and passenger service". Below, the Adirondack Railway as it was two years ago, with passenger trains operating. Peter Bretz photo.....



THE LRC TRAIN has been returned by Amtrak to Canada, as reported previously. Amtrak had leased it to see if a "tilt" train could make the Boston-NY "electrified"times called for by the NEC Improvement Project. The answer was yes. Since Amtrak does not have the money to buy a fleet of LRC coaches, someone came up with the idea to modify an Amcoach with tilt trucks. Now undergoing testing between Boston and New Haven is F40 locomotive 350 and Amcoach 21183 retrofitted with a tilt system. If the test works out, a pool of Amfleet cars would be modified for use in Boston-Washington express service.....

AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING will be Aug 18 in Washington. Items on the agenda include Retirement and sale of two HEP baggage cars; purchase of two slumbercoaches; Superliner dual brake modifications; Application of dual brakes to Amfleet cars; Michigan track upgrading, phase VII; Upgrading of bridge over the St. Joseph River at Niles MI; and West-side connection, New York--bridge & tunnel consulting study..

THE RUMOR MILL has it that new Amtrak president Graham Claytor is appalled at Amtrak's present dining service and wants to return to the old ways.....

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION DEPT. is in a fight with the state Transportation Commission, which is cutting out some transit money. Caltrans director Gianturco will be out of a job at the end of 1982, as this is a gubernatorial election year.....

MEXICO SAYS that San Antonio-Mexico City runs should return soon.....

News in this issue is updated thru Aug 15, 1982.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Oct 2: Boston-Bellows Falls VT via B&M Fitchburg and Conn. River Divisions, incl. East Deerfield Loop, with steam train connection at Bellows Falls to Steamtown USA. SSAE to Mass. Bay RR Enthusiasts, Box 136, Ward Hill MA 01830.

Oct 8-12 "Zephyr Weekend" L.A.-Trinidad CO, bus to Denver, visit Colo RR Museum; RG ZEPHYR to Salt Lake, DESERT WIND to L.A. $390 to $573; $75 deposit. Pacific RR Society, Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. (714) 684-7458. Send SASE.

Oct 8-10: Private cars "La Condesa" & "Mojave River" travel L.A.-Las Vegas on DESERT WIND. Info & reservations: Classic Rail Adventures, Inc., PO Box 2541, Orange CA 92669. Telephone (714) 532-1380.

Oct 9-10: Northwest Rail Excursion, Portland-Spokane-Seattle-Portland, first Amtrak train on UP Hinkle-Spokane; Sunday lunch at Leavenworth WA. See ad p. 22. NRHS Pacific NW Chap, Room 1, Union Station, Portland OR 97209.

Oct 16-17 & 23-24: Autumn Leaf Weekend; bus from Richmond VA, special train on Alleghany Central Scenic RR, overnight at Covington. $80-$99, kids $70. By mail only. NRHS Old Dominion Chapter, Box 8583, Richmond VA 23226.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK, EURAIL PASS, 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS - tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

It's handy! THE Amtrak Law--Robert J. Swan/Box 1866/Long Beach CA 90801, $30.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

Be with it! Robert J. Swan's AMTRAK LAW, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801, $30.

ALASKA RAILWAY SPECIAL TRAIN, Anchorage to Seward and return. Sunday, September 12, 1982, leave 8:00 a.m., return 8:00 p.m. Photo stops and time for visiting in Seward. Box supper included in fare of $50.00. Pacific Railroad Society, P. O. Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516.

Guess and booboo? NOT with RJSwan's Amtrak Law, Box 1866/Long Beach CA 90801/$30.

WHITE PASS & YUKON STEAM SPECIAL, Skagway/White Pass Summit and return with four private cars pulled by Locomotive #73. Sunday, Sept. 19, 1982, leave 8:00 a.m., return 1:30 p.m. Several photo stops. Rate of $60.00 includes box lunch. Pacific Railroad Society, P. O. Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516.

To HELP the process, first LEARN the Amtrak Law. It's HANDY to be SURE!

DENVER & RIO Grande and Western Pacific combined 1915 timetable reprint, for the Panama Pacific Exposition, $1. Many interesting branch line and narrow gauge schedules. Over 30 other Colorado employe and passenger reprints. Colorado Railroad Museum, P.O. Box 10, Golden, Colo. 80402. Open year around at 17155 W. 44th Avenue.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads: only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Long distance train travel is a civilized pleasure, a welcome alternative to the rush of jets or the tedium of the interstates. But as a new report by Congress's Budget Office makes clear, passenger trains are also a heavily subsidized luxury that America can ill afford. This new assessment of Amtrak is a persuasive argument for limiting passenger rail to a few high-density intercity corridors, where fares might come close to covering costs.

"Last year Amtrak spent nearly three dollars for every dollar it earned in fares. Some of the deficit was covered by state subsidies. But most had to come from

Uncle. So what, say Amtrak's champions; all intercity transportation is subsidized. Besides, they insist, trains conserve energy and serve low-income travelers. That is all true. But the closer one looks at passenger train subsidies the more difficult they are to justify.

"In 1980, Washington laid out $776 million for Amtrak, excluding capital grants. That's more than the Government spent on buses or airlines, but less than on autos. Yet when compared with the total service provided, the division of the subsidy pie looks quite different. Bus, car and airline subsidies all amounted to less than two-tenth's of a cent per passenger mile. Amtrak, by contrast, received more than 18 cents per passenger mile.

"Passenger trains on short-haul routes do save imported oil. Once the Washington-Boston corridor is electrified and lighter cars are in use, the Budget Office estimates that the savings will amount to about 1,800 barrels a day. But energy efficiency doesn't come cheap: each barrel saved will cost $195. And much of this saving would be offset by long-haul trains that actually use more energy than alternative transport.

"Amtrak, it is said, serves travelers who can't afford to drive. But so do buses, which get you practically anywhere in America for less than the price of a train ride. Actually this argument can be turned against Amtrak: In 1977, 53 percent of all train riders had incomes exceeding $20,000, while only 20 percent had incomes below $10,000. Is it fair to subsidize what is essentially a middle-class service?

"The report of the Congressional Budget Office makes no judgment, but it does point toward a plausible compromise. Trains in densely traveled corridors--notably Washington-Boston and San Diego-Los Angeles--can reduce air and road congestion at relatively low cost per passenger mile. Longer-haul passenger transport costs a fortune, yet serves no clear social purpose. By cutting back to corridor service, Amtrak could cut avoidable losses by 75 percent.

"Amtrak supporters want no part of such a service reduction. They believe in the romance of the cross-country train; they fear loss of political support for subsidized rail. But sometime, somehow, the cost of Amtrak must be reduced. A country that is barely willing to spend enough to feed the poor has no business spending hundreds of millions each year on a little-used frill."

--New York Times editorial, "Drop the Trains", July 31.

The Great

Northwest Rail Excursion

Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 9-10, 1982

(Oct 9:) Portland-Spokane via UP.

(Oct 10:) Spokane-Seattle-Portland via BN.

- 190 miles Hinkle-Spokane is on scenic trackage not used by Amtrak.
- Overnight in Spokane at Ridpath Hotel.
- Sunday stopover at Leavenworth, recreated Bavarian village in Cascade Mountains.
- Superliners: eight coaches, Sightseer lounge.
- One price from Portland or Seattle includes everything except two meals.

Amtrak

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ROOM 1, UNION STATION
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

MAY 1982 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE/(DECREASE) OVER 1981

METROLINERS	85,775	(13.1)
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	508,509	(3.3)
PHIL-NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	15,474	(31.0)
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	162,261	(20.3)
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	64,126	(12.0)
NEW YORK-HARRISBURG	23,566	(13.8)
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	859,711	(9.6)
NEW YORK-NIAGARA FALLS	59,011	(8.1)
CHICAGO-ST.LOUIS	25,966	(3.4)
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	10,711	(57.6)
CHICAGO-DETROIT/TOLEDO	33,578	(18.0)
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	12,778	(12.0)
CHICAGO-QUINCY	5,317	(15.3)
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	113,215	(2.3)
SEATTLE-EUGENE	4,880	(47.7)
VANCOUVER-SEATTLE		(100.0)
WASHINGTON-CINCINNATI		(100.0)
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	19,218	(17.9)
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	17,062	2.6
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	4,964	(26.1)
CHICAGO-PORT HURON	9,219	(13.8)
CHICAGO-DUBUQUE		(100.0)
CHICAGO-DULUTH	8,566	(31.4)
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	20,323	11.7
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	4,950	(26.8)
CHICAGO-PEORIA		(100.0)
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	13,877	(4.3)
PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH	6,905	(18.6)
PORTLAND-EUGENE		(100.0)
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	7,087	.0
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	377,627	(17.1)
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	8,282	(32.8)
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	53,004	(12.0)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	18,293	(24.9)
CHICAGO-CINCINNATI-WASHINGTON	6,579	(61.0)
CHICAGO-SEATTLE (N)	26,598	21.0
CHICAGO-SAN FRANCISCO	25,136	(17.7)
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	20,816	(30.0)
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	15,382	(20.7)
CHICAGO-TEXAS	7,136	(61.1)
LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS	7,575	(18.5)
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	36,091	(29.5)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	24,669	(15.6)
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	5,787	(6.0)
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	12,007	(13.0)
SEATTLE-SALT LAKE CTY/CHI	13,032	(31.1)
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	22,636	(12.6)
LOS ANGELES/OGDEN-CHI	9,799	(23.0)
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	312,822	(22.0)
SPECIAL TRAINS	9,897	(35.8)
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,560,057	(14.4)

Here are the latest ridership figures released by Amtrak--for May. The April figures were published in RTN no. 247.

Amtrak patronage in May slipped somewhat more than it did in April, with the system total down 14.4%, compared to 9.8% in April.

Only three routes in the system showed an increase this month; they were the Oakland-Bakersfield SAN JOAQUINS (up 2.6%), the Chicago-Valparaiso commuter service (up 11.7%), and the Chicago-Seattle EMPIRE BUILDER (up a remarkable 21.0%).

A good deal of the loss in patronage was due to the previous discontinuance or cutbacks of routes. The discontinuances are identified by the blanks in the ridership column. The two trains cut back to tri-weekly--the CARDINAL and the EAGLE--had the heaviest ridership losses as a result --61% and 61.1% respectively.

The recession, of course, made itself felt on Amtrak, probably accounting for most of the decreases. Also, the month of May is a difficult one to generate heavy ridership, as many people are in a stay-at-home period, preparing for their summer vacations, which will come later.

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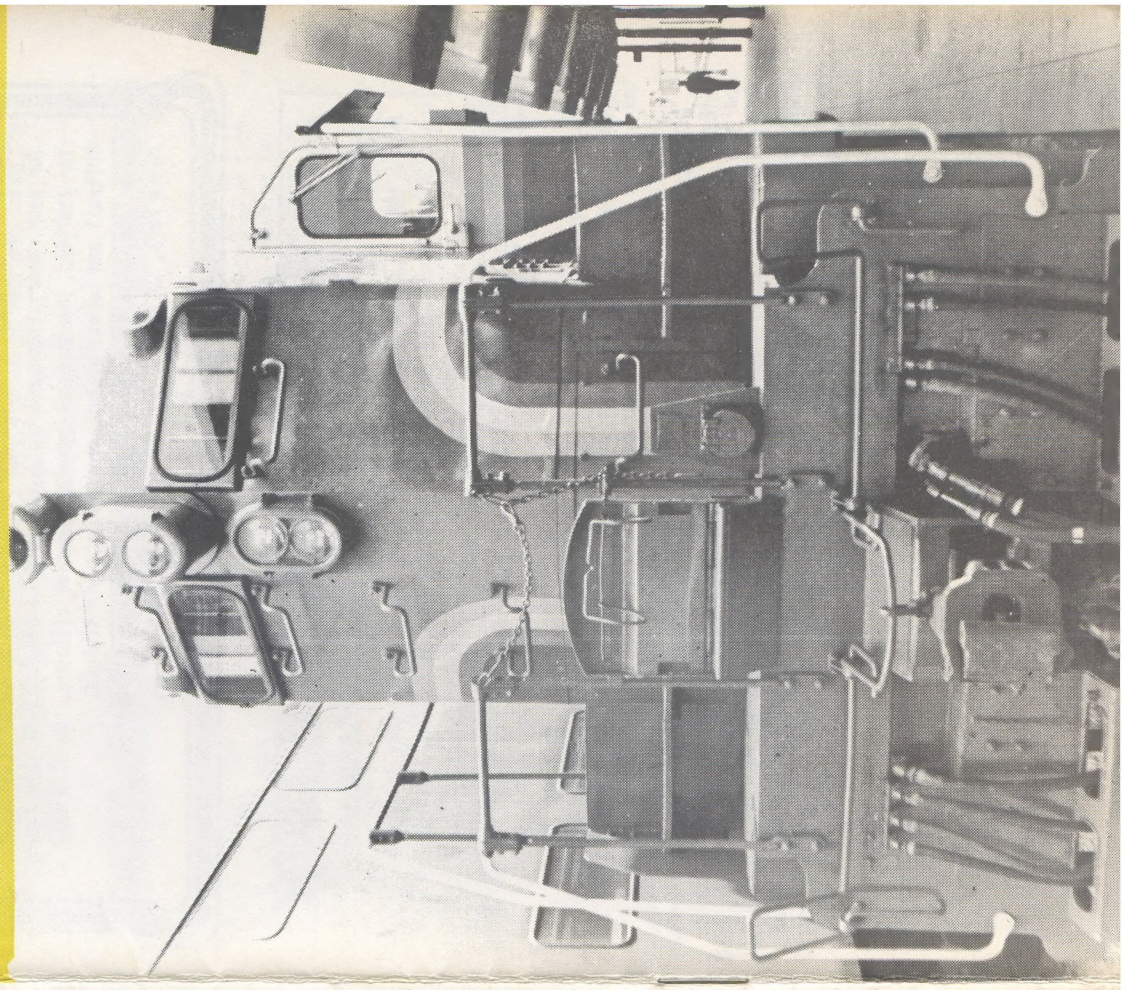

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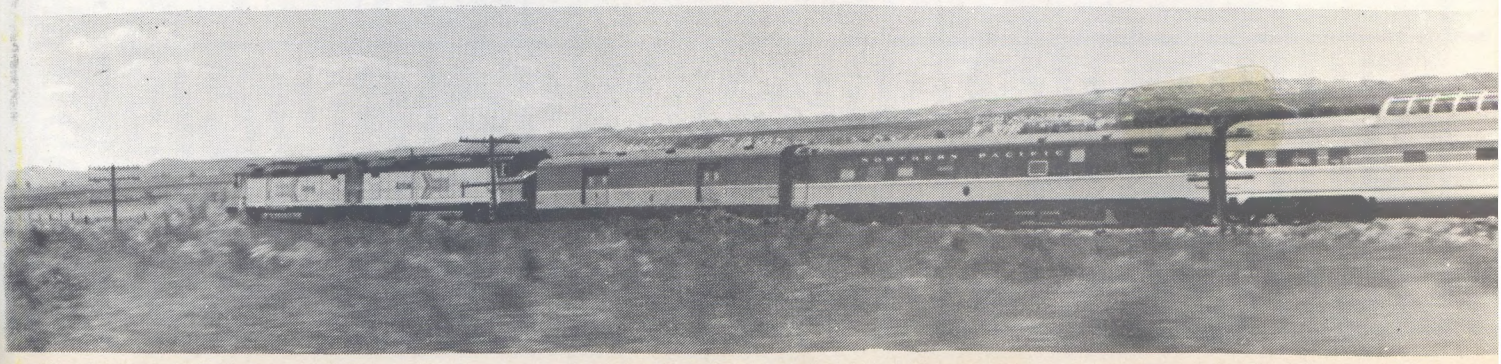
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